

National
Gallery of Art

Film

Winter 19





Special Events 13

The Films of Gordon Parks 23

Jean Vigo 31

From Vault to Screen:
Portugal 35

Hollywood's Poverty Row
Preserved by UCLA 41



The winter 2019 film season at the National Gallery of Art features a retrospective of films by American photographer and filmmaker Gordon Parks presented in conjunction with the Gallery's special exhibition *Gordon Parks: The New Tide, Early Work 1940 – 1950*. A series of special events in the winter season encompasses, among others, the Washington premieres of *Gray House* by Austin Jack Lynch and Matthew Booth and *The Image Book* by Jean-Luc Godard. There are also several new documentaries: *On the Wings of Brancusi*, *Breaking the Frame*, *Ryuichi Sakamoto: Coda*, *Acid Forest*, and *More Art Upstairs*. New restorations include Jean-Pierre Melville's *When You Read This Letter* from the mid-1950s and Ishmael Reed and Bill Gunn's extraordinary *Personal Problems* (1980), attended by Ishmael Reed in person. Other series during the winter months include a complete retrospective of French filmmaker Jean Vigo; the occasional series *From Vault to Screen*, this season focusing on the classic cinema of Portugal in archival prints from Cinemateca Portuguesa; and *Hollywood's Poverty Row Preserved by UCLA*, a look at the B-movie producers of the Golden Age in Hollywood and their offbeat, low-budget works that ultimately sparked the indie film movement of the 1950s and 1960s.



January

2	Wed	12:30	On the Wings of Brancusi	p13
4	Fri	12:30	On the Wings of Brancusi	p13
5	Sat	2:30	Gray House	p13
6	Sun	4:00	Personal Problems	p14
10	Thur	12:30	On the Wings of Brancusi	p13
11	Fri	1:00	Rosenwald	p15
12	Sat	1:00	Gordon Parks: Films of the New Deal	p23
		3:30	Gordon Parks: Louisiana Story	p23
13	Sun	4:00	Gordon Parks: Early Documentaries	p24
19	Sat	1:00	Rosenwald	p15
		4:00	Gordon Parks: The Learning Tree	p24
26	Sat	2:00	Gordon Parks: Shaft	p25
		4:00	Gordon Parks: Shaft's Big Score	p25
27	Sun	4:30	Godard's The Image Book	p15

Films are shown in the East Building Auditorium, in original formats whenever possible. Seating for all events is on a first-come, first-seated basis unless otherwise noted. Doors open thirty minutes before showtime. For more information, visit nga.gov/film, email film-department@nga.gov, or call (202) 842-6799.



February

2	Sat	2:00	Gordon Parks: Leadbelly p26
3	Sun	4:00	Gordon Parks: Solomon Northup's Odyssey p26
9	Sat	2:00	Gordon Parks: The Weapons of Gordon Parks; Half Past Autumn p27
10	Sun	4:00	Gordon Parks: Martin; Moments without Proper Names p27
16	Sat	2:00 4:00	Jean Vigo: À propos de Nice; Jean Taris, champion de France; Zéro de conduite p31 Jean Vigo: L'Atalante p32
17	Sun	2:00 5:00	Hip-Hop's Great Day: Gordon Parks and a Legacy of Photographic Inspiration p16 When You Read This Letter p16
23	Sat	2:00 4:00	Vault to Screen Portugal: Douro, Faina Fluvial; Aniki-Bóbó p35 Vault to Screen Portugal: Os Verdes Anos (The Green Years) p36
24	Sun	4:00	Vault to Screen Portugal: A Revolução de Maio (Revolution in May) p36

Films are shown in the East Building Auditorium, in original formats whenever possible. Seating for all events is on a first-come, first-seated basis unless otherwise noted. Doors open thirty minutes before showtime. For more information, visit nga.gov/film, email film-department@nga.gov, or call (202) 842-6799.



March

2	Sat	2:00 4:00	Vault to Screen Portugal: Belarmino p37 Vault to Screen Portugal: Ossos p37
3	Sun	5:00	Carolee, Barbara, and Gunvor; Breaking the Frame p17
9	Sat	2:00 4:00	Hollywood's Poverty Row: Hearst Metrotone News; Jack Frost; The Vampire Bat p41 Vault to Screen Portugal: Tabu p38
10	Sun	4:30	Hollywood's Poverty Row: Hearst Metrotone News; Balloon Land; The Sin of Nora Moran p42
16	Sat	2:00 4:00	Hollywood's Poverty Row: Hearst Metrotone News; Snow White; False Faces p42 Hollywood's Poverty Row: Hearst Metrotone News; Dancing on the Moon; Damaged Lives p42
17	Sun	4:30	Ryuichi Sakamoto: Coda p17
23	Sat	12:00 2:30	Hollywood's Poverty Row: Hearst Metrotone News; Me and the Boys; Mamba p43 Black Dreams at Sea: The Sardine Fisherman's Funeral; An Opera of the World p18
24	Sun	4:30	Acid Forest p18
30	Sat	1:00 4:00	More Art Upstairs p19 Hollywood's Poverty Row: News of the Day, Grampy's Indoor Outing; Strange Illusion p43
31	Sun	4:30	Hollywood's Poverty Row: Hollow Triumph p44

Films are shown in the East Building Auditorium, in original formats whenever possible. Seating for all events is on a first-come, first-seated basis unless otherwise noted. Doors open thirty minutes before showtime. For more information, visit nga.gov/film, email film-department@nga.gov, or call (202) 842-6799.



Special Events

Jan 2 – Mar 30

On the Wings of Brancusi

American premiere

Wed Jan 2, Fri Jan 4, Thur Jan 10 (12:30)



Romanian sculptor Constantin Brancusi (1876 – 1957) has been an enduring influence on a generation of American artists. Insights into Brancusi's legacy are presented by artists Carl Andre, Lynda Benglis, Ellsworth Kelly, Martin Puryear, Richard Serra, Donald Judd, Roy Lichtenstein, Claes Oldenburg, and others. Locations include the recreated Brancusi studio at the Centre Pompidou, the Philadelphia Museum of Art's Brancusi gallery, and studios and exhibitions of the artists. Anne d'Harnoncourt (director emeritus of the Philadelphia Museum of Art), Margit Rowell and Ann Temkin (cocurators of the 1995 Brancusi retrospective), critics Robert Storr and Richard Woodward, and others offer interpretive commentary. (Edgar Howard and Susan Wald, 2018, 52 minutes)

Gray House

Washington premiere

Austin Jack Lynch and Matthew Booth in person

Sat Jan 5 (2:30)



A striking synthesis of sound and image in a hybrid documentary/fictional form, *Gray House* by filmmaker Austin Jack Lynch (son

of David Lynch) and photographer Matthew Booth is, at times, purposefully mysterious. Shifting between the natural world and architectural spaces, using both real and simulated settings, the film is a meditation on landscape, loss, loneliness, and human need. “A lot of the structure of the film and the specific subject matter of this location [versus] that location evolved in an intuitive way, almost like painting. You move through these environments in a certain way... the shrimp boat in Texas, the community in Virginia... There was just naturally a world of really interesting complex sound, and so you had to try and create a [soundscape] for the film that was as immersive as the pictures. The music is composed by Alvin Lucier. His work is structural and predetermined, somewhere between what you think of as music and what you think of as action itself” — Austin Jack Lynch. (Austin Jack Lynch and Matthew Booth, 2017, 75 minutes)

Personal Problems

Ishmael Reed in person

Sun Jan 6 (4:00)



From 1979 to 1981, with little money but exceptional talent, a group of avant-garde artists assembled in New York to produce what American poet, playwright, artist, and essayist Ishmael Reed calls an “experimental soap opera” with a largely African American cast and crew. Their leader was the late Bill Gunn, whose film *Ganga and Hess* has been hailed as a horror classic. Unusual in the history of cinema, the actors in *Personal Problems* define themselves and their roles, and they largely improvise, thereby avoiding the stereotypes offered up by Hollywood. After a flurry of showings in 1981, the remaining fifty-four video copies of *Personal Problems* lay in Reed's attic for three decades until they were rediscovered by curator Jake

Perlin, who carried a copy to Lincoln Center and BAMcinématek at the Brooklyn Academy of Music. Now, in a new restoration from Kino Lorber, *Personal Problems* is “a startling, totally idiosyncratic work of art” — Nick Pinkerton, *Artforum*. (Ishmael Reed and Bill Gunn, 1980, 165 minutes)

Rosenwald

Aviva Kempner in person

Fri Jan 11 (1:00)

Sat Jan 19 (1:00)

Rosenwald documents the remarkable collaborations between businessman and philanthropist Julius Rosenwald, author and educator Booker T. Washington, and African American communities in the South. Together they built over five thousand schools during the Jim Crow era, a time when few African Americans received any public education at all. In addition Julius Rosenwald established a fund that awarded grants primarily to unusually talented African American artists and intellectuals. Fellowships were awarded to Marian Anderson, Ralph Bunche, W. E. B. DuBois, Ralph Ellison, Dr. Charles Drew, John Hope Franklin, Zora Neale Hurston, Gordon Parks, James Baldwin, Jacob Lawrence, and Woody Guthrie, among others. (Aviva Kempner, 2015, 95 minutes)

Godard's The Image Book

Sun Jan 27 (4:30)



The reclusive eighty-eight-year-old Jean-Luc Godard (the only French New Wave director still living) continues to practice his enigmatic art. In this most recent work, *The Image Book*, he probes the topics that have preoccupied his late work — the state of film aesthetics, the discourse between history and cinema, the borders

between filmmaking and other forms of image making — forming a broad philosophical inquiry into the state of the modern world. “Godard pieces together fragments, clips them from some of the greatest films of the past, then digitally alters, bleaches, and washes them, all in the service of reflecting on what he sees and what he makes of the dissonance that surrounds him. He uses his own voice, reminiscent of those of Leonard Cohen or Bob Dylan in the twilights of their careers, to guide us through the fascinating labyrinth of his mind. His ontological enquiry into the image continues to be one of the most moving in history” — Piers Handling. (Jean-Luc Godard, 2018, subtitles, 90 minutes)

Hip-Hop’s Great Day: Gordon Parks and a Legacy of Photographic Inspiration

Nelson George, Adrian Loving, and Vikki Tobak in person

Sun Feb 17 (2:00)

In a multidimensional presentation and discussion, artist and educator Adrian Loving and scholar Vikki Tobak explore the visual influences of Gordon Parks’s legacy in photography and film, particularly his famous photograph *A Great Day In Hip Hop* (XXL Magazine) from September 1998. Tracing his impact on music videos directed by artists such as Fab 5 Freddy and Kendrick Lamar, Loving and Tobak celebrate Parks’s ingenuity, dedication, and power. An excerpt from Nelson George’s latest film, *A Great Day in Hip Hop*, is also screened and discussed. A book signing of *Contact High: The Visual History of Hip-Hop* follows the presentation. (Approximately 100 minutes)

When You Read This Letter

Washington premiere of the restoration

Sun Feb 17 (5:00)

Celebrated chanteuse Juliette Gréco — known as *la Muse de l’existentialisme* in mid-twentieth-century Paris — plays Sister Thérèse, a nun who leaves behind the quiet security of her convent to run a family business and help her real sister (Irène Galter) escape the clutches of a shifty lowlife (Philip Lemaire). A recently restored and rarely screened work from Jean Pierre Melville, *When You Read This Letter* has the added advantage of Henri Alekan’s elegant location shooting, most of which took place in a now unrecognizable South of France. Unusual for Melville, who specialized in the macho world of the crime thriller, this cast is led by women. An intriguing missing link in Melville’s influential oeuvre, *When You Read This Letter* has until now never been released in the United States. (Jean-Pierre Melville, 1953, subtitles, 104 minutes)

Breaking the Frame

preceded by **Carolee, Barbara, and Gunvor**

Sun Mar 3 (5:00)



With *Breaking the Frame*, filmmaker Marielle Nitoslawska crafts a daring profile of the radical New York artist Carolee Schneemann, a pioneer of performance art and avant-garde cinema who, for over five decades, has been challenging the taboos leveled against the female body. *Breaking the Frame* is “a work about a formidable artist that is itself an important work of art” — Mark McElhatten. (Marielle Nitoslawska, 2012, 100 minutes). Preceded by the tender triptych, *Carolee, Barbara, and Gunvor*, personal portraits of three highly influential and prolific artists in their own words: Schneemann, Barbara Hammer, and Gunvor Nelson. (Lynne Sachs, 2018, 8 minutes)

Ryuichi Sakamoto: Coda

Sun Mar 17 (4:30)



Artist, musician, singer, and composer extraordinaire, Ryuichi Sakamoto is known for responding to even the smallest environmental shifts and tensions. This mindfulness is at times expressed in mixing the familiar tones and textures of life with manufactured and erratic sounds, such as those produced by the water-damaged grand piano he discovered and used after the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear accident. Sakamoto finds inspiration in unrelated sources — from the physical world to movie scores, from experimental music to ethnomusicology. After the Fukushima accident he was inspired by the antinuclear power movement, and after his own cancer treatments, he created the very personal *async* solo album. *Ryuichi Sakamoto: Coda*, shot over five years, is an elegant and understated portrait that sheds light on one of the most interesting musical minds of the era. (Stephen Nomura Schible, 2017, 100 minutes)

Black Dreams at Sea: The Sardine Fisherman's Funeral and An Opera of the World

Elizabeth Alexander and Manthia Diawara in person
Sat Mar 23 (2:30)



Two artists — painter Ficare Ghebreyesus (1962 – 2012) from Asmara in Eritrea and filmmaker Manthia Diawara from Bamako in Mali — meet metaphorically in this program focusing on their work. Political refugees, activists, scholars, artists, and storytellers, both men settled in the United States and found themselves working odd jobs, joining the African American community of poets, and hunkering down within their own artistic practice. Ficare Ghebreyesus's epic painting *The Sardine Fisherman's Funeral* centers on the *abebuu adekai*, the figurative coffin of the Ga people in Ghana, replete with symbols, historical references, and Eritrean iconography expressing a depth of feeling for the power of the sea. Manthia Diawara's film *An Opera of the World* (2017), based on the African opera *Bintou Were*, mines the Malian filmmaker's own migration experience against the backdrop of recent tragedies on the Mediterranean Sea. Diawara's film features contemporary philosophers and employs footage of refugees in exodus, probing cinema's power to bear witness. Manthia Diawara and Elizabeth Alexander — poet, essayist, playwright, scholar, and president of the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation — discuss and contrast both of these works (Ghebreyesus's painting and Diawara's film) following the screening. (Approximately 100 minutes)

Acid Forest

Sun Mar 24 (4:30)



Imagine a dead forest as a tourist attraction, a place where human visitors are not only observers, but are also observed by thousands of black birds. Lithuanian artist Rugilė Barzdžiukaitė (this year

representing her country at the Venice Biennale) is known in the art world for her focus on “the gap between objective and imagined realities in a manner that cuts through anthropocentric ways of thinking,” writes critic Kaleem Aftab. Beautiful, odd, and mesmerizing, *Acid Forest* — largely achieved through complex aerial shots from a bird's perspective within a now treeless national park in Lithuania — eavesdrops on tourists' reactions to the obvious devastation before them. “There used to be an ancient pine forest, but then cormorants started to land. Now there are thousands of these birds and they kill the pine trees with their excrement. The human observations and responses to this environment are as multilayered and bizarre as the history of the forest itself” — Rugilė Barzdžiukaitė. (Rugilė Barzdžiukaitė and Dovydas Korba, 2018, 63 minutes) *Presented in association with the Environmental Film Festival*

More Art Upstairs

Jody Hassett Sanchez in person
Sat Mar 30 (1:00)



For three weeks in September, beer-fueled debates in the bars of Grand Rapids, Michigan, are focused on art, not politics or sports. Thousands arrive for ArtPrize, a competition and fair that allows ordinary people to engage with blue-chip artists in ways that rarely happen at more established venues like Art Basel. *More Art Upstairs* follows five artists exhibiting work in this unusual populist experiment. The public gets to vote, via their phones, on the art that should qualify to win half the prize money — the largest monetary award in the art world. What attracts the artists, in turn, is the chance to prevail in a public vote and gain exposure to some of the country's top critics, who award the other half of the prize. Part game show, part riveting art exploration, *More Art Upstairs* grapples with the democratization of culture, artists' need (or not) to connect with their audiences, and the fading of the canonical art establishment. (Jody Hassett Sanchez, 2017, 77 minutes)





The Films of Gordon Parks

Jan 12 – Feb 10

Best known as a groundbreaking photographer, Gordon Parks was also a prolific and influential filmmaker. This series of films and videos contextualizes Parks's early interest in the power of motion pictures, highlights his own film productions, and explores his influence on new generations of filmmakers and artists from the second half of the twentieth century to the present day. Programmed in conjunction with the exhibition *Gordon Parks: The New Tide, Early Work 1940 – 1950*. Special thanks to the Gordon Parks Foundation.

Films of the New Deal

Sat Jan 12 (1:00)



A program of government-sponsored documentaries that directly influenced Gordon Parks, this program features short newsreels produced by the Office of War Information. Examples include *Manpower* (1942, 10 minutes), *It's Everybody's War* (1942, 18 minutes), and *The Negro Soldier* (produced by Frank Capra, 1944, 43 minutes), among others. (Approximately 90 minutes)

Louisiana Story

Sat Jan 12 (3:30)

Produced by the Standard Oil Company when Parks was employed there as a photographer, Robert Flaherty's iconic documentary feature film *Louisiana Story* follows midcentury oil extraction alongside the day-to-day life of a young Cajun boy, a witness to that unrelenting expansion. Flaherty's focus on the lush landscape of Louisiana and on its inhabitants as the "actors" in his film directly influenced Parks's interest in the power of nonfiction storytelling. (Robert Flaherty, 1948, 79 minutes)

Gordon Parks: Early Documentaries

Sun Jan 13 (4:00)



In June 1961, *Life* magazine published Parks's seminal photo-essay *Freedom's Fearful Foe: Poverty*, a profile of one family living in a favela on the outskirts of Rio de Janeiro. *Flavio* is a portrait of that family's eldest son and his daily struggle to survive (1964, 18 minutes). *Flavio* is followed by two other journalistic works: *Diary of a Harlem Family* (1968, 20 minutes) and *The World of Piri Thomas* (1968, 60 minutes). "Produced by NET (National Educational Television), these three films explore the lives of individuals separated by location — Brazil, Black Harlem, and Spanish Harlem — but are all unified by their impoverished environments and struggles to survive for a better future" — Anton Yu. *Special thanks to the University of Indiana Libraries Moving Image Archive*

The Learning Tree

Sat Jan 19 (4:00)



The Learning Tree was the first production by a major Hollywood studio (Warner Brothers) to be directed by an African American. Gordon Parks's feature film debut is based on his 1963

semi-autobiographical novel of the same name about a teenager growing up in rural Kansas during the 1920s. Remarkably, Parks not only wrote the screenplay adaptation of his own novel and directed the film, he also produced it and composed the musical score. In 1989 *The Learning Tree* was included in the National Film Registry by the United States National Film Preservation Board. (1969, 35mm, 106 minutes)

Shaft

Sat Jan 26 (2:00)



The commercial success of *The Learning Tree* prompted a multi-year contract with MGM Pictures, leading to Parks's hugely successful second feature film, *Shaft*. Single-handedly reviving the dormant private-eye genre, the story of John Shaft (played by Richard Roundtree) is told as much with narrative as through dynamic camera work and fast-paced editing. It is enhanced by Isaac Hayes's iconic score, particularly the Oscar-winning theme. (1971, 98 minutes)

Shaft's Big Score

Sat Jan 26 (4:00)

Building on the global commercial success of *Shaft*, *Shaft's Big Score* raised the bar for the crime-fighting genre with pyrotechnics and even more adrenaline-rousing, high-speed chase scenes. Richard Roundtree's tough, skilled detective invited visions of a James Bond-like franchise, and this sequel showcases an even more heroic John Shaft, intent on solving the mystery of a friend's murder and the delivery of a small fortune intended for an inner-city children's center. (1972, 106 minutes)

Leadbelly

Sat Feb 2 (2:00)



With the success of his “blaxploitation” titles and crime dramas, Parks negotiated his next feature to be of more personal and historic interest: the biography of famed folk blues singer Huddie Ledbetter. Nicknamed “Leadbelly” by a madam, the man who wrote “Goodnight Irene” and “Rock Island Line” traverses the South with his twelve-string guitar. Leadbelly’s life recalls an African American past characterized by racism, poverty, and imprisonment, as well as ingenuity, racial solidarity, and self-expression. Although lauded by critics, the film was not successfully promoted and proved a commercial failure, even though it is one of Parks’s most intimate films. (1976, 126 minutes)

Solomon Northup’s Odyssey

Sun Feb 3 (4:00)



Eight years after *Leadbelly*, Parks returned to filmmaking, directing, writing, and scoring with this drama for public television’s American Playhouse series. Based on Northup’s biography *Twelve Years a Slave*, *Solomon Northup’s Odyssey* depicts the title character’s

harrowing experiences in forced servitude. A black man born free in upstate New York, Northup worked as a carpenter and a talented violinist until he was lured away from his family to Washington, DC, where he expects to play a concert. Instead he is drugged, shackled, and sold into slavery in Louisiana. (1984, 133 minutes)

Half Past Autumn: The Life and Work of Gordon Parks

preceded by **The Weapons of Gordon Parks**

Sat Feb 9 (2:00)

Part of Warren Forman’s Artists at Work documentary series, *The Weapons of Gordon Parks* is an early record of Parks told in his own words before his success as a filmmaker (1967, 28 minutes). Followed by the HBO-produced documentary *Half Past Autumn*, an insightful and personal portrait narrated by Alfre Woodard, featuring interviews and reminiscences with Parks, his friends, collaborators, and family members. (Craig Rice, 2000, 101 minutes)

Moments without Proper Names

preceded by **Martin**

Sun Feb 10 (4:00)



Asked to make an autobiographical film for public television, Parks constructed a cinematic collage of his music, still photographs, archival news footage, and narration drawn from his lifetime of creative work. A filmic poem, *Moments without Proper Names* explores themes of childhood, racism, black self-determination, success, poverty, and war: all subjects that Parks dedicated his life to addressing with his art. (1988, 60 minutes) Preceded by Parks’s final film, *Martin*, a production of his ballet based on the life of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., made for KCET public television, Los Angeles. (1989, 55 minutes)





Jean Vigo

Feb 16

Although he made only four films, Jean Vigo's (1905 – 1934) career had a profound effect on the history of art cinema, and Vigo himself is a treasured figure, due in part to his short and difficult life. His interest in cinema developed from his work in a photography studio and stints as an assistant cinematographer. Combining surrealist motifs with poetic sequences and mixing cinema vérité with metaphor, Vigo's film treatments are also infused with a sense of social justice, ultimately leading to problems with censors followed by numerous small edits to his work. As a child he led a chaotic life. His family, from the Basque Pyrenees, had little money and moved around frequently. His father, who assumed the name Miguel Almereyda, was a liberal journalist and anarchist who was allegedly murdered in prison while still a young man. The consequence of all this misfortune was that Jean suffered poor health from an early age and finally died at age twenty-nine, three weeks after the Paris premiere of his now beloved *L'Atalante*. Jean Vigo's work has recently been restored and rereleased.

À propos de Nice

followed by **Jean Taris, champion de France**
and **Zéro de conduite**

Sat Feb 16 (2:00)

Jean Vigo's first film mixes footage of strollers along Nice's Promenade des Anglais with scenes that mock the city's class inequities. In the background is the Carnival of Nice with its strange and fanciful papier-mâché figures. Mimicking the Soviet montage artists to create a swirling urban mosaic (Boris Kaufman, the cinematographer for *À propos de Nice*, was the brother of Russian experimenter Dziga Vertov), Vigo depicts the outlandish within this famed Riviera city — and all under cloudy skies. (1930, silent with musical score, 23 minutes)

A commissioned sports documentary on the famous French swimmer who competed in three Summer Olympics, *Jean Taris*,

champion de France is also an abstract reflection on the human form in movement. (1931, silent with musical score, 9 minutes)

In *Zéro de conduite*, four boys feeling the pains of boarding school life stage an uprising. Basing his scenario on his own bitter childhood memories, Vigo comments on youthful rebellion — adding surreal motifs like an epic slow-motion pillow fight — making insinuations that reach far beyond school life. This new restoration, the director's cut with previously unseen sequences, eliminates the intertitles added to earlier prints. (1933, 49 minutes)

L'Atalante

Restored director's cut

Sat Feb 16 (4:00)



A delicate tale of a barge-master and his bride filmed on the canals northeast of Paris during the winter of 1934 blends the serenity of poetic realism with tinges of surrealist futility. While earlier restorations of Vigo's masterwork reinstated bits of missing footage, this new restoration, using preserved nitrate prints, is much closer to the 1934 director's cut. Maurice Jaubert's avant-garde film score (Jaubert also scored *Zéro de conduite*) is one of the best in French poetic cinema. "Vigo used everything around him: the sun, the moon, snow, night. Instead of fighting unfavorable conditions, he made them play a part" — cinematographer Boris Kaufman. (1934, subtitles, 89 minutes) Restored in 4K by Gaumont in association with Cinémathèque Française and The Film Foundation, with the support of CNC, L'Immagine Ritrovata, and L'Image Retrouvée laboratories.





From Vault to Screen: Portugal

Feb 23 – Mar 9

The occasional series From Vault to Screen brings together new restorations and overlooked treasures from film archives around the world. During the winter season, the focus is on the holdings of Cinemateca Portuguesa — Museu do Cinema, a major collection in Lisbon. Although censorship laws limiting freedom of speech influenced the national culture until the 1970s, Portugal's artists and filmmakers managed to produce a small but interesting body of work. At first they made literary adaptations, innocent comedies, and historical dramas, but by the mid-twentieth century, the transnational cinematic "new wave" was influencing domestic production. By the mid-1980s Portugal's legendary film maestro Manoel de Oliveira, a titan of world cinema, was astutely probing the mysteries of love and life and winning awards at major film festivals. In six programs, the series From Vault to Screen blends an engaging range of cinematic styles and eras in both new restorations and original prints. Special thanks to Linda Lilienfeld, Sara Moreira, Teresa Borges, Tiago Baptista, and the staff of Cinemateca Portuguesa.

Aniki-Bóbo

preceded by **Douro, Faina Fluvial**

Sat Feb 23 (2:00)



Douro, Faina Fluvial poetically depicts the lives of laborers who work along the Douro River in Porto. As the first film by Manoel de

Oliveira (1908 – 2015), Portugal's most celebrated director, it is now a national treasure. John Malkovich, who appeared in three of Oliveira's features, wrote in the *New York Times*, "I don't know if a career like his will ever be possible again." Oliveira continued to make movies until his death at age 106. (Manoel de Oliveira, 1931, 19 minutes)

Oliveira's first feature-length work, *Aniki-Bóbo*, cast children from Porto's streets as protagonists in a drama inspired by a simple childhood rhyme. Using neorealist technique and adapting a story by José Rodrigues de Freitas, the film's critical reception was at first only lukewarm. Today *Aniki-Bóbo* is recognized as a landmark of world cinema. Twenty-one years then passed before his next feature, *Acto da Primavera* (*Rite of Spring*), appeared in 1963. (Manoel de Oliveira, 1942, subtitles, 71 minutes)

Os Verdes Anos (The Green Years)

Sat Feb 23 (4:00)

An influential but undervalued artist of postwar European cinema, Paulo Rocha (1935 – 2012) was most famous for *Mudar de vida* (1966), a neorealist love story filmed in a coastal village. Yet his lesser-known first feature *Os Verdes Anos* is both a sensitive new wave drama and a poetic city symphony, with lingering views of Lisbon's architecture, streets, and parks recorded at all hours of the day. Luc Mirost's verité cinematography is both natural and thoughtful, carefully avoiding any extravagance. A young man arrives from the provinces ready to try his luck at shoemaking. He meets a young working-class woman, the two start a relationship, and all seems secure. Yet Rocha's outwardly simple tale hides deeper complexities, as the young man, feeling the hostile modern urban malaise, loses his trust in humanity and attempts to rebel. (Paulo Rocha, 1963, subtitles, 87 minutes)

A Revolução de Maio (Revolution in May)

Sun Feb 24 (4:00)



A film of historical prominence, *Revolution in May* was produced by the National Secretary of Propaganda to mark the tenth anniversary of the demise of Portugal's First Republic and the rise of the *Estado Novo* (New State or Second Republic, 1933 – 1974). Led by António de Oliveira Salazar, the *Estado Novo* was a right-leaning corporatist regime fueled by deeply conservative and autocratic ideologies that empowered Salazar to institute censorship and a secret

police force to subdue opposition. Images and excerpts from the speeches and public appearances of Salazar were assembled with techniques derived from Russian montage, shaping what one critic called "a film of nationalist exultation." *Revolution in May* remains the only Portuguese fiction film that overtly delves into political propaganda. "I liked the film a lot, I liked it too much, perhaps, because afterwards I could not sleep" — António Salazar. (António Lopes Ribeiro, 1937, 138 minutes)

Belarmino

Sat Mar 2 (2:00)



Belarmino portrays the life and times of Belarmino Fragozo (1931 – 1982), a favorite Portuguese fighter whose career in the ring spanned the 1950s through the 1970s. A landmark film from Portugal's new wave (Cinema Novo Português, an extension of the global movement that energized international film production during the 1960s), *Belarmino* was a surprising break from previous traditions of Portuguese cinema. With its casual documentary-style renderings of working-class Lisbon, compelling compositions filmed by Augusto Cabrita (a renowned midcentury Portuguese cinematographer), and footage of Belarmino himself training or strolling the city's streets, the film garnered sympathetic reviews from the European press and won the prestigious Prémio da Casa da Imprensa in Portugal for its director, a new wave legend. (Fernando Lopes, 1964, subtitles, 80 minutes)

Ossos

Sat Mar 2 (4:00)

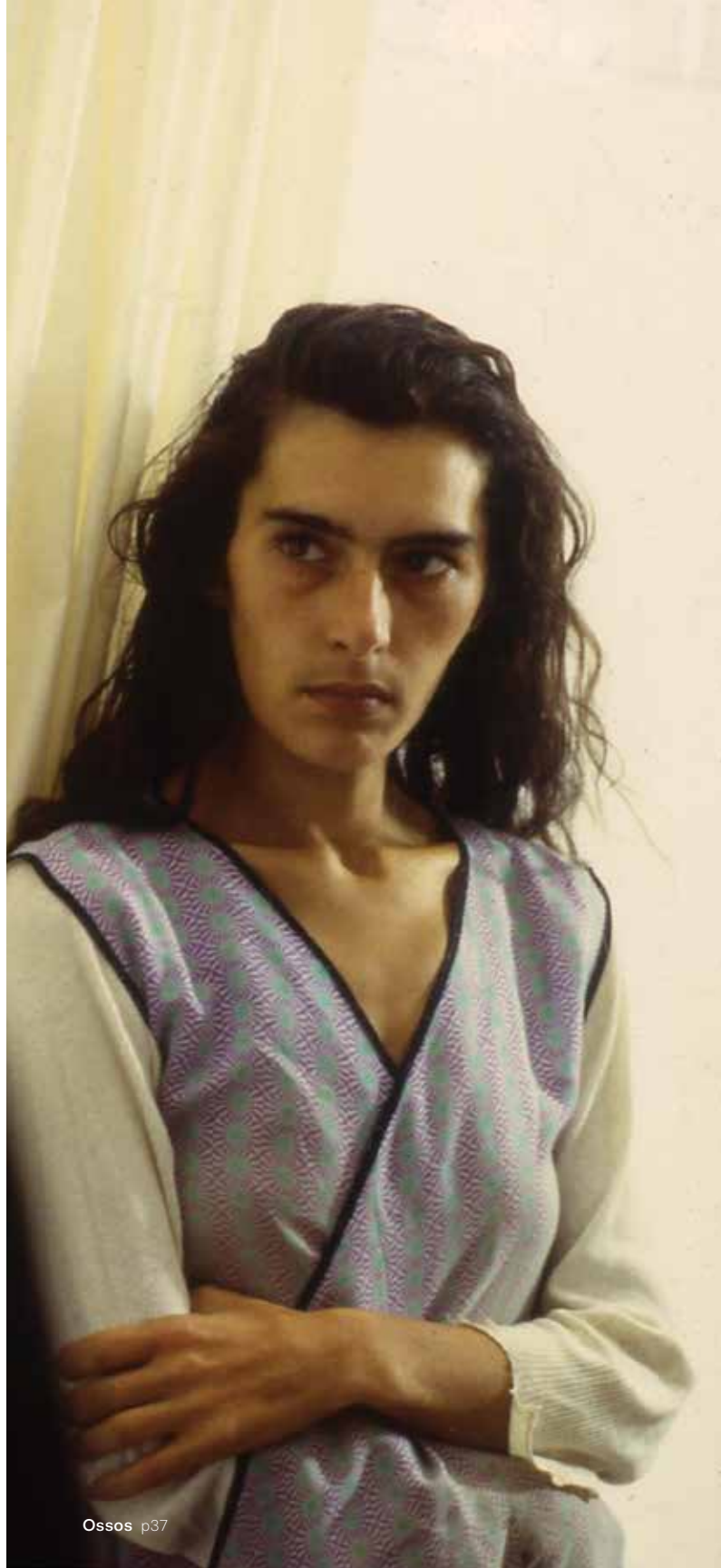
With his distinctively minimalist approach, Pedro Costa has earned the reputation "the Samuel Beckett of cinema." *Ossos*, a tale of

young lives torn apart by tragedy and misfortune, became Costa's first entry in a trilogy set entirely in a decaying quarter of Lisbon, a haven for immigrants from former Portuguese colonies in Africa. The use of natural light, long takes, and low-key, shadowy shooting fostered the film's documentary tone. "The soulful close-ups Costa accords his abject characters verge on the beatific (the soft, long-haired father with his faraway gaze evokes one of Bellini's musing Madonnas) and the exquisite lighting turns two symmetrical shots of a photograph, some keys, and crumpled cigarette packs lying on a red dresser into colorist still lifes" — James Quandt. (Pedro Costa, 1997, 35mm, subtitles, 94 minutes)

Tabu

Sat Mar 9 (4:00)

Director Miguel Gomes has been praised for his aesthetic audacity — his recent six-hour, stylistically intrepid *Arabian Nights*, for example, transposes the timeless Middle Eastern folk tale to contemporary Portugal. In *Tabu* Gomes again mixes new elements with traditional form, crafting a structure that is part myth, part melodrama, and part poetic experiment. The film's multidimensional plot combines ill-fated love, rousing adventure, colonial mutiny, and political commentary. Critic Richard Brody writes, "Gomes's vision, realized in calmly expansive, keenly perceptive compositions in a charcoal black-and-white, is two-fold. First, he reveals a rational modern Europe of noble yet sterile passions, of impotent principle, and economized energy. . . . Second, he sees the predatory injustices of colonial life as a sort of Wild West of anarchic self-indulgence and self-reinvention, a perfect environment for romance to flower and to grow to monstrous, untenable dimensions." (Miguel Gomes, 2012, subtitles, 118 minutes)





Hollywood's Poverty Row Preserved by UCLA

Mar 9 – 31

During the 1930s and 1940s hundreds of low-budget but boldly conceived genre films were created in Hollywood's so-called Poverty Row — a stretch of B-movie studios along Gower Street from the Paramount lot to Sunset Boulevard. These often short-lived studios speedily compiled scripts and completed productions within days, usually employing casts of upstart actors. Some of them also released films from other outlier producers of offbeat work. The influence of these frequently fly-by-night operations should never be underestimated — their creations showed an artistic daring and, in retrospect, even anticipated the indie film movement of later decades. Several factors contributed to Poverty Row's decline, among them the advent of television and the general demise of the studio system. UCLA Film & Television Archive has made it their mission to rescue and preserve the films of Poverty Row. This series, a sampling from their collection, also features newsreels and short subjects of the era.

The Vampire Bat

preceded by **Hearst Metrotone News** and **Jack Frost**

Sat Mar 9 (2:00)

With an atmosphere worthy of Universal's contemporaneous horror films, this slick little thriller from Phil Goldstone's ambitious Majestic Pictures finds mad doctor Lionel Atwill at work in a village where bodies are turning up mysteriously drained of blood. In a cast that includes Lionel Atwill, Fay Wray, Melvyn Douglas, and Dwight Frye, could a creepy local guy (Frye) be responsible? (Frank R. Strayer, 1933, 65 minutes)

Before the feature: *Hearst Metrotone News*, vol. 4, no. 250 (1933, 9 minutes), and the ComiColor cartoon *Jack Frost* (Ub Iwerks, 1934, 9 minutes)

The Sin of Nora Moran

preceded by **Hearst Metrotone News** and **Balloon Land**

Sun Mar 10 (4:30)



An audacious use of flashbacks within flashbacks contributes to the feverish, hallucinatory tone of this lurid melodrama about a circus performer (the enigmatic Zita Johann) who becomes the mistress of an ambitious politician. Accused of a murder she did not commit, she prepares to die in the electric chair. (Phil Goldstone, 1933, 65 minutes)

Before the feature: *Hearst Metrotone News*, vol. 4, no. 269 (1933, 9 minutes), and *Balloon Land* (Ub Iwerks, 1935, 7 minutes)

False Faces

preceded by **Hearst Metrotone News** and **Snow White**

Sat Mar 16 (2:00)

Self-proclaimed cad Lowell Sherman (*Way Down East*) stars in and directs this difficult-to-classify mix of sophisticated comedy and grotesque horror, playing an unscrupulous surgeon whose innovative face-lifting technique proves to have some significant shortcomings. (Lowell Sherman, 1932, 35mm, 81 minutes)

Before the feature: *Hearst Metrotone News*, vol. 4, no. 226 (1932, 9 minutes), and *Snow White*, a Betty Boop cartoon (Dave Fleischer, 1933, 7 minutes).

Damaged Lives

preceded by **Hearst Metrotone News** and **Dancing on the Moon**

Sat Mar 16 (4:00)



Fate sticks out her foot to trip a young businessman, who returns from a debauched night on the town with a case of VD, which he promptly communicates to his innocent fiancée. Edgar G. Ulmer's

pioneering film on exploitation (Ulmer also cowrote the screenplay) benefits from lush production values, thanks to underwriting by the Canadian Social Health Council. (Edgar G. Ulmer, 1933, 61 minutes)

Before the feature: *Hearst Metrotone News*, vol. 4, no. 252 (1933, 9 minutes), and *Dancing on the Moon* (Dave Fleischer, 1935, 8 minutes)

Mamba

preceded by **Hearst Metrotone News** and **Me and the Boys**

Sat Mar 23 (12:00)



Crazed colonialism rages in this rare two-strip Technicolor production with a sadistic, insistently unlovable Jean Hersholt as a plantation owner in German East Africa. He imports an aristocratic bride (Eleanor Boardman) from the old country, only to find her falling for British officer Ralph Graves. (Albert S. Rogell, 1930, 78 minutes)

Before the feature: *Hearst Metrotone News*, vol. 1, no. 269 (1930, 9 minutes), and *Me and the Boys*, a musical short with Estelle Brody and Ben Pollack's jazz band (Victor Saville, 1929, 9 minutes)

Strange Illusion

preceded by **News of the Day** and **Grampy's Indoor Outing**

Sat Mar 30 (4:00)



Edgar G. Ulmer's hallucinatory version of *Hamlet* is transposed to a Los Angeles sanitarium, where a young man (Jimmy Lydon) has dreams of his mother (Sally Eilers) being seduced by a stranger, who promptly appears in the wolfish form of actor Warren William. (Edgar G. Ulmer, 1945, 87 minutes)

Before the feature: *News of the Day*, vol. 17, no. 288 (1945, 8 minutes), and *Grampy's Indoor Outing*, a Betty Boop cartoon. (Dave Fleischer, 1936, 7 minutes)

Hollow Triumph

Sun Mar 31 (4:30)



A-list actors Paul Henreid and Joan Bennett play the leads in this little-known and handsomely photographed (by celebrated cinematographer John Alton) film noir. On the run from a murderous rival, a gangster (Henreid) assumes the place — and the mistress (Bennett) — of a prominent psychologist who just happens to be his double. Hard-hitting and gritty, the film, based on a 1946 novel by Murray Forbes, is a Poverty Row masterwork. (Steve Sekely, 1948, 35mm, 83 minutes) *Restored 35mm print from the UCLA collection.*





Index

- Acid Forest 18
Aniki-Bóbo 35
À propos de Nice 31
A Revolução de Maio (Revolution in May) 36
Balloon Land 42
Belarmino 37
Black Dreams at Sea: The Sardine Fisherman's Funeral and An Opera of the World 18
Breaking the Frame 17
Carolee, Barbara, and Gunvor 17
Damaged Lives 42
Dancing on the Moon 42
Diary of a Harlem Family 24
Douro, Faina Fluvial 35
False Faces 42
Films of the New Deal 23
Flavio 24
Gordon Parks: Early Documentaries 24
Grampy's Indoor Outing 43
Gray House 13
Half Past Autumn: The Life and Work of Gordon Parks 27
Hearst Metrotone News 41, 42, 43
Hip-Hop's Great Day: Gordon Parks and a Legacy of Photographic Inspiration 16
Hollow Triumph 44
Image Book, The 15
Jack Frost 41
Jean Taris, champion de France 31
L'Atalante 32
Leadbelly 26
Learning Tree, The 24
Louisiana Story 23
Mamba 43
Martin 27
Me and the Boys 43
Moments without Proper Names 27
More Art Upstairs 19
News of the Day 43
On the Wings of Brancusi 13
Opera of the World, An 18
Ossos 37
Os Verdes Anos (The Green Years) 36
Personal Problems 14
Rosenwald 15
Ryuichi Sakamoto: Coda 17
Shaft 25
Shaft's Big Score 25
Sin of Nora Moran, The 42
Snow White 42
Solomon Northup's Odyssey 26
Strange Illusion 43
Tabu 38
Vampire Bat, The 41
Weapons of Gordon Parks, The 27
When You Read This Letter 16
World of Piri Thomas, The 24
Zéro de conduite 31

Films are shown in the East Building Auditorium, in original formats whenever possible. Seating for all events is on a first-come, first-seated basis unless otherwise noted. Doors open thirty minutes before showtime. For more information, visit nga.gov/film, email film-department@nga.gov, or call (202) 842-6799.


Image credits

Cover, 42 (top): Capitol Film Exchange/Photofest; inside front cover, p10–11, 17 (top): Picture Palace Pictures; p2, 4, 13 (bottom): Grasshopper Film; p6: Gordon Parks, *Muhammad Ali*, London, 1966, gelatin silver print, National Gallery of Art, Washington, Corcoran Collection (The Gordon Parks Collection), courtesy of and copyright The Gordon Parks Foundation; p8, 30, 32–33, 49: Pathé; p12–13 (top): Checkerboard Film Foundation; p14: Kino Lorber; p15, 20–21: Wild Bunch; p17 (bottom): Mubi, Inc.; p18 (top): Elizabeth Alexander; p18 (bottom): Rugilė Barzdžiukaitė and Dovydas Korba; p19: Jody Hassett Sanchez; p22, 25: MGM/Photofest; p23: National Archives and Records Administration; p24 (top): Thirteen Productions; p24 (bottom), 28–29: Warner Bros./Photofest; p26, 46: Paramount Pictures/Photofest; p27: Gordon Parks, *The Stranger*, 1958, silver dye bleach print, printed later, National Gallery of Art, Washington, Corcoran Collection (The Gordon Parks Collection), courtesy of and copyright The Gordon Parks Foundation; p34–39: Cinemateca Portuguesa; p40, 43 (bottom): Producers Releasing Corporation/Photofest; p42 (bottom): Weldon Pictures Corp./Photofest; p43 (top): Tiffany Productions/Photofest; p44–45: Eagle-Lion/Photofest.

Cover

Phil Goldstone, *The Sin of Nora Moran*, 1933 p42





National
Gallery of Art

Film

Winter 19